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URBAN FORM: BRINGING THE VISION INTO FOCUS

Report of the Provincial - Municipal Urban Form Working Group


DISCLAIMER RE WORKING GROUP REPORTS

Six groups were established in November 1991 to study issues and provide advice in the following areas: Urban Form, Countryside, Human Services, Infrastructure, Economic Vitality and Investment Planning and Financing Mechanisms.

The reports which have been produced by these groups will be used as background information during a lengthy period of public discussion and refinement. The reports represent the work and advice of individuals chosen by their ministry, municipality or organization for their knowledge of their particular subject area. The reports represent a consensus of the group and as a result do not necessarily represent the opinions of individual members of the group.

The reports and their options and recommendations were produced for discussion purposes only. They are not representative of Provincial policy nor do they represent the policy of individual provincial ministries or municipalities.





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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Urban Form Working Group has identified the following issues and findings:

- The pattern of urban development, i.e. the urban "envelope", in the GTA is essentially set for the next 20 years, but opportunities exist to modify the structure and form/intensity of development.
- The major objective of achieving more compact urban development is to extend the life of the current urban envelopes.
- There will still be "greenfields" development within the designated urban envelopes but opportunities exist to achieve higher densities and establish nodal development patterns, both within greenfields and re-urbanizing areas.
- While recognizing the need to implement a nodal concept of development in the GTA as focal points for more intensive development, the corridors linking the nodes may be even more important as a means of realizing the GTA vision of a more compact urban form.
- The urban structure of the GTA consisting of nodes and corridors is largely in place. Issues revolve around completing missing linkages and nodes.
- The realization of a more intensive nodal development pattern with higher densities of jobs and residents needed to support more effective transit services will be a slow evolutionary process.
- The implications of the differences between the mature areas of the GTA and the developing areas must be understood if the vision is to be effectively implemented. These differences include issues surrounding the type of development, varying demands on human services, potential for higher forms of public transit and live/work relationships.
- Further research must be undertaken to investigate the concept of compact urban form and nodal development in business parks/industrial areas and special purpose areas located along major transportation corridors and "greenfield" nodes, particularly in the developing areas.
- A proposed corridor concept is illustrated which links a series of major and intermediate level nodes in the GTA. This recognizes an emerging structure that can be built upon and used as a basis for discussion during the next stage of the review process.

- The GTA planning process needs to be reviewed to assess its strengths and weaknesses. In addition, work must begin on the evaluation of alternative implementation vehicles including, provincial plans, policy statements, legislative changes, particularly in the areas under study by the Sewell Commission.
- Regardless of the type of implementation vehicle chosen, its effectiveness will be determined by a strong, cooperative two tier planning process. The urban structure should be the responsibility of the regional municipalities, in consultation with local municipalities, and the form, mix and intensity of development should rest largely with the local municipalities.
- If a vision for the GTA is to be implemented, agreement on urban form is a crucial first step. It provides the basis for planning and infrastructure decisions needed to bring the vision into focus.
- Official Plans for all regional municipalities must be completed as soon as possible. The finally agreed urban form concept should be incorporated by amendment in all such plans.
- The relationship to the hinterland abutting the GTA and how the GTA connects to the rest of Ontario, Canada and internationally are major considerations in the development of a long term vision for the GTA.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The population of the Greater Toronto Area ¹ is projected to grow from its current four million people to over six million people by the year 2021. Through earlier initiatives of the Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA) and the Greater Toronto Coordinating Committee (GTCC) in 1989, general agreement was reached, within the five regional municipalities, on the proposed distribution of this growth.

The IBI Group was then retained to study the challenges and opportunities which lay ahead in accommodating the projected growth. With the release of the Urban Structure Concepts Study (USCS), the Province sought comments from Regional and local municipalities, provincial ministries, and other stakeholders. As a result, the five regions of the GTA agreed in principle that urban sprawl should be stopped and that some form of nodal development should be created.

In December 1991 "Growing Together: Towards an Urban Consensus in the Greater Toronto Area" was released. This report provided a summary of three other reports: the USCS; "Watershed: The Second Interim Report of the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront"; and "Options for a Greater Toronto Area Greenlands Strategy".

Following "Growing Together", the OGTA released "GTA 2021: The Challenge of our Future, A Working Document" in early March 1992. The report is intended to raise public awareness of the issues facing the GTA; to present a "vision" of what the GTA will look like in 2021; and to provide a broad outline of the process to achieve this vision.

The emerging consensus highlighted several areas of recurring concern. To assist the next stage of the debate, six working groups, coordinated by the OGTA, were established to further examine the issues.

The working groups were chaired by provincial staff but consisted of both municipal and provincial members. The OGTA provided the secretariat role. (Appendix I)

The six working groups were: Urban Form, Countryside, Human Services, Infrastructure, Economic Vitality and Investment Planning & Financing Mechanisms.

¹ Metropolitan Toronto and the Regions of Peel, York, Halton and Durham

The mandate of the Urban Form Working Group included defining and elaborating upon what is meant by "urban structure", "compact urban form", "nodes and corridors" in the GTA context; identifying impediments to achieving the desired objectives of compact urban form; illustrating how compact urban forms of development can reflect the values of social equity, economic enhancement and a healthy environment; and finally, what needs to be done at the local, regional and provincial levels to achieve a more compact form.

The Urban Form group began work in November '91 and quickly formed three sub-committees. One group addressed the current situation and set the context for the report; the second group defined nodes and corridors within a compact urban form structure; and the third group researched and analyzed case study examples of compact urban form.

The report of the Urban Form Working Group has attempted to further define compact urban form in a conceptual way, within the values and principles of the GTA vision statement, as a basis for the next stage of the ongoing assessment of the GTA's future.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING EXISTING FORM

Introduction

A wealth of background material exists on the GTA and its five regions. This section builds upon previous work in order to establish a framework for the analysis of future urban form in the GTA. More specifically, the objectives are to:

- develop an understanding of the existing pattern of development and urban form in the GTA; (Figure 2.1)
- identify the forces which have affected urban form;
- identify similarities and differences in urban form between the regions; and
- identify the constraints and opportunities for directing future urban form.

Urban Form: Spatial Dimensions (Figure 2.2)

- development pattern - the amount and location of land designated for urban development
- urban structure - how development is distributed or grouped within the municipality
- form/intensity - the density and scale of development

Urban Form in the GTA

Urban form encompasses the natural and cultural environment, transportation, open space and all human activities distributed throughout the GTA. The key landforms which define the urban area within the GTA include the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Niagara Escarpment and the many river valleys in the Lake Ontario and Lake Simcoe watersheds. Wetlands, forests, environmentally significant areas and Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest are integral to the long term sustainability of the region's ecosystem.

The GTA urban form is focused on the inner core of Central Toronto which, because of location, historical growth, transit availability and the wide range of business and cultural activities, has become the main provincial centre for the flow of people, communications, goods and services. This area is also a vital national centre and its "health", both physically and economically, is critical to the growth of the GTA and Canada.

Surrounding the central core are residential and employment areas which grew from historical villages to become the "suburbs" of the 1950's and 1960's. Continuing residential and economic growth has resulted in re-development in many of these older areas. Over time, strong identifiable centres such as the Scarborough and North York City Centres, have evolved to become a focus for employment, administrative and commercial activities.

As growth continued, the urban boundaries of the GTA pushed outward in all directions, particularly along major transportation networks such as Yonge Street, Highway #401 and the Queen Elizabeth Way. Mature and developing areas surround the inner core and have the potential to expand further, as a result of continuing demand for residential and employment land. These outer areas include both urban and rural components, downtowns and suburban commercial uses and self-sustaining as well as commuter-oriented neighbourhoods.

Growth has brought opportunities and vitality to the GTA, but it has also created stress on the environment, agricultural land, quality of water and air and, at least in the minds of some people, the quality of life.

Forces Shaping Urban Form In the GTA

Development Commitments

The character and distribution of future growth in the GTA will be directly affected by development commitments already made. The combination of existing, committed and proposed development adds a time dimension to the spatial aspects of urban form. (Figure 2.3)

In the short term, urban form can be influenced through the design, massing and layout of development already committed. Proposed development, on the other hand, represents an opportunity to influence structure and intensity, especially at nodes and along corridors.

In the long term, there is potential to influence and shape the development pattern but the principles and commitment to the long term must be put in place now if they are to effectively guide future development decisions and approvals.

Environment

The evolution of the concepts of sustainable development and ecosystem planning, together with an increasing awareness of the significance of natural features, such as the Oak Ridges Moraine, may alter the way in which the relationship between development and the environment is defined in the future.

Permanent Landforms

Areas such as the Lake Ontario Waterfront, the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges Moraine and the major river valleys draining to Lake Ontario and Lake Simcoe require planning and design considerations that safeguard their attributes.

The qualities of such features should be recognized and provided for in the urban fabric, particularly the degree to which public accessibility can enhance their value as unique resources.

Economic Forces

The range of economic forces which have had a major and direct impact on the GTA include:

- reactions to boom/recessionary periods, interest rates, employment/unemployment growth, land costs and housing costs;
- changes in the economic structure, including the declining importance of manufacturing; the increase in service and office/retail employment/ and the communications revolution; and
- the market's response to changing consumer lifestyles as reflected in the design, size and marketing of housing, cars, leisure and human services

Demographic Forces

Demographic trends determine who consumers are and influence what goods and services are developed to meet their needs. How the consumers satisfy their housing and transportation demands impacts urban form.

- the movement of the "Baby Boom" generation through the life cycle affects employment, housing, recreation, social services and urban form;
- changing socio-economic conditions such as two income families, improved education and reductions in the birth rate;

- downward shifts in natural increase were offset by immigration, particularly in the GTA where about one-third of the 161,000 annual immigrants to Canada ultimately settle²; and
- changes in the characteristics of society also affect the distribution and delivery of a range of services and facilities including day care, housing, transit, shopping, recreation and leisure, etc.

Development Industry

It is the development industry that actually provides the residential and employment space in the GTA. As such, the industry has to try to reconcile its perception of market demand with the requirements of public policies and objectives. The two areas often are in conflict.

Industry representatives often state that they don't mind rules being set -- as long as they are fair and applied consistently. This does not seem to be an unreasonable request.

Transportation and Infrastructure

The transportation system is a combination of transit, highways and connecting road networks. All of these elements focus on the movement of people, communications and goods and services.

- at a personal level, the automobile represents freedom of movement, privacy and a sense of status.
- factors such as two income families and land/development costs have pushed the relationship between live and work choices to their limits;
- infrastructure has tended to lead rather than follow development because of the longer planning horizon for infrastructure; and
- lagging public investment in transportation infrastructure has resulted in capacity constraints in both the transit and road transportation systems.

² 1990 data as described in "Migration Trends in the GTA" by Clayton Research Associates, 1991

Public Policy

The public sector, by responding to demographic, economic and social forces exerts its own force on urban form, primarily through the preparation of regional and local Official Plans which provide direction for the future growth of municipalities and influence both private and public sector decisions.

Inconsistent implementation and lack of coordination of policies and programs between different levels of government have impacted urban form.

Personal Value Systems

Personal value systems determine choices in such things as housing, social services, employment, transportation, day care and education.

- urban form is affected by fundamental values related to:
 - home and family and the need to establish a "sense of place";
 - security, both financial (employment) and physical; and
 - social well-being including education, day care, health care and leisure.
- traditionally, the single detached "family" dwelling and the "family" car have epitomized the achievement of the values of home, security and social well-being. Marketing, urban planning and design, education and public policies have all tended to reinforce the positive aspects of these values;
- traditionally, the market has sought to satisfy the "value systems" of those with resources while the public sector has responsibility for satisfying the broader needs of the community.

Identification of Common Issues and Differences

This section summarizes urban form issues common to all of the regions in the GTA as well as key differences in the type of issues being faced by mature and developing areas.

Common Issues

Environment - has to be addressed in a more holistic manner, applying an ecosystem approach to future planning, as advocated by the Crombie Commission and others.

Improving the Live/Work Relationship - separation of employment and residential areas has negative effects on land consumption, municipal assessment, infrastructure costs, environmental pollution and social well-being. The creation of a closer live/work relationship reduces commuting and congestion and improves transit and communication efficiency.

Rationalization of infrastructure - financial constraints at all levels of government means finding ways to make existing infrastructure last longer and serve more people. New ways to coordinate new investments must be found.

Creating a More Diverse Housing Stock - required in future to respond to changing demographic and economic circumstances, especially the aging of the population.

Attracting Economic Development - employment and economic growth are priorities for all of the municipalities in the GTA.

Providing a Healthy and Secure Living Environment - increasingly, communities and residents are concerned with issues related to their physical security.

Effective Delivery of Human Services - has become a priority as the share of public sector budgets devoted to these services increases.

Differences in Urban Form

Demographics - Developing areas tend to attract younger families while the population of more mature areas is aging. The implication of this pattern on both the mix of housing and human service demands are obviously different.

Density - developing areas are generally characterized by low density residential and employment areas, while mature areas and major development corridors are experiencing pressure for higher densities and reurbanization of older areas.

Public versus private transportation - those areas of the GTA which are served by either subway or GO train enjoy a higher proportion of transit use, while travel in developing areas is car-oriented and only transit-oriented along the main transit corridors.

Development Orientation - the focus of new development in mature areas of the GTA, particularly Metro Toronto, is re-urbanization and re-development, whereas the focus in developing areas is "greenfields" development and infilling of vacant land within the existing service areas.

Access to Employment - the separation of live/work areas has created an imbalance between employment and residential opportunities.

Lifestyle - the range of cultural, community, tourist and shopping opportunities is more diverse in more mature areas.

Environment - protection of pristine natural environments is a key priority in developing areas while mature areas are beginning to focus on the reclamation and rehabilitation of degraded environments.

Conclusions

The existing pattern, structure and form of development in the GTA has been shaped by the historical interplay of a complex range of factors, most of which will continue to affect urban form as committed developments are realized. The traditional way in which individuals and families have satisfied their needs with respect to home, security and social well-being affects the achievement of broader community objectives related to the environment, public expenditures, housing affordability, economic vitality and the social well-being of individuals across the spectrum of society.

The desire for attainment of the objectives of home, security, and social well-being are universal. While the future urban form must satisfy these values, it may do so in a manner different from the past. Informing people about the long range implications of their personal choices will only be part of the solution. The challenge will be to develop an urban form which gives people lifestyle choices in order to satisfy their personal values and at the same time enable broader community objectives to be achieved. (Figure 2.4)

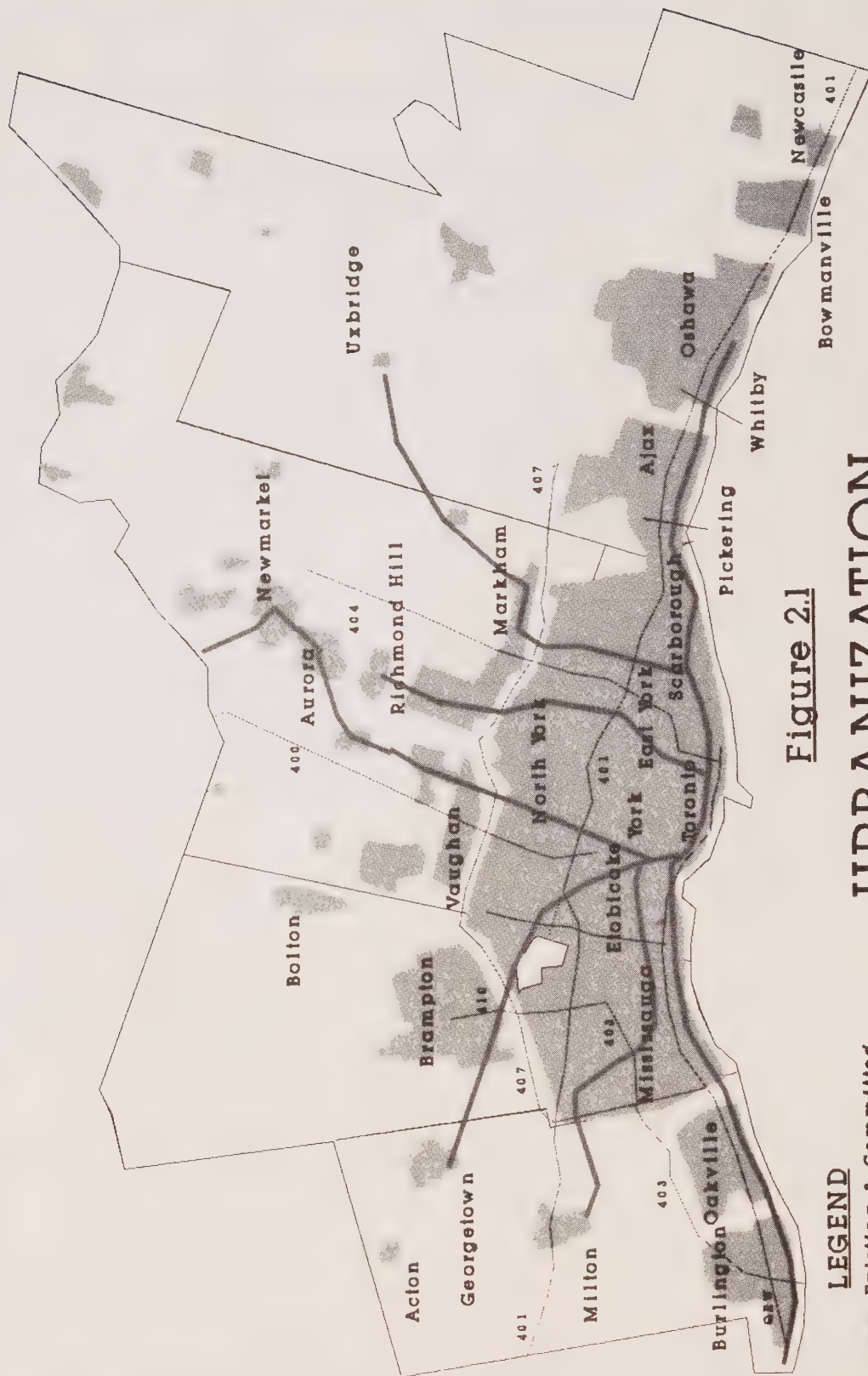


Figure 2.1
URBANIZATION

LEGEND

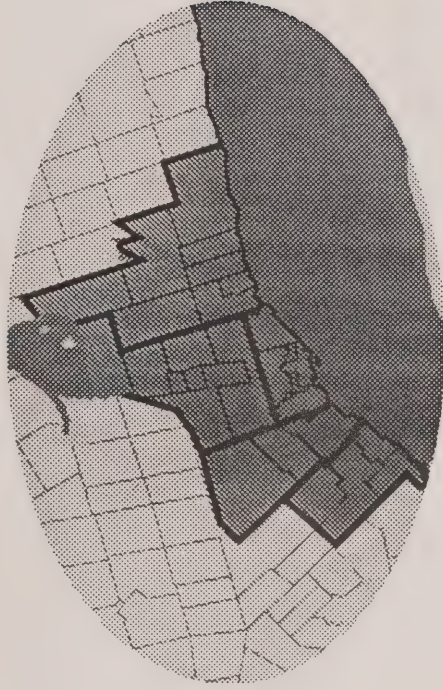
Existing & Committed Urban Area

GO Transit

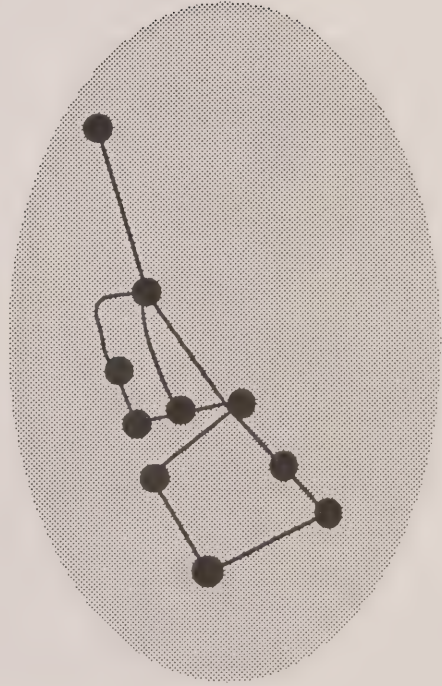
Major Highways

Figure 2.2

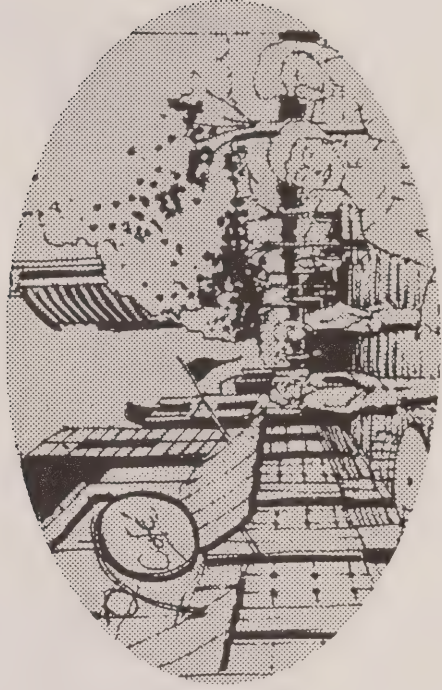
URBAN FORM



PATTERN



STRUCTURE



INTENSITY

Figure 2.3

INFLUENCING URBAN FORM

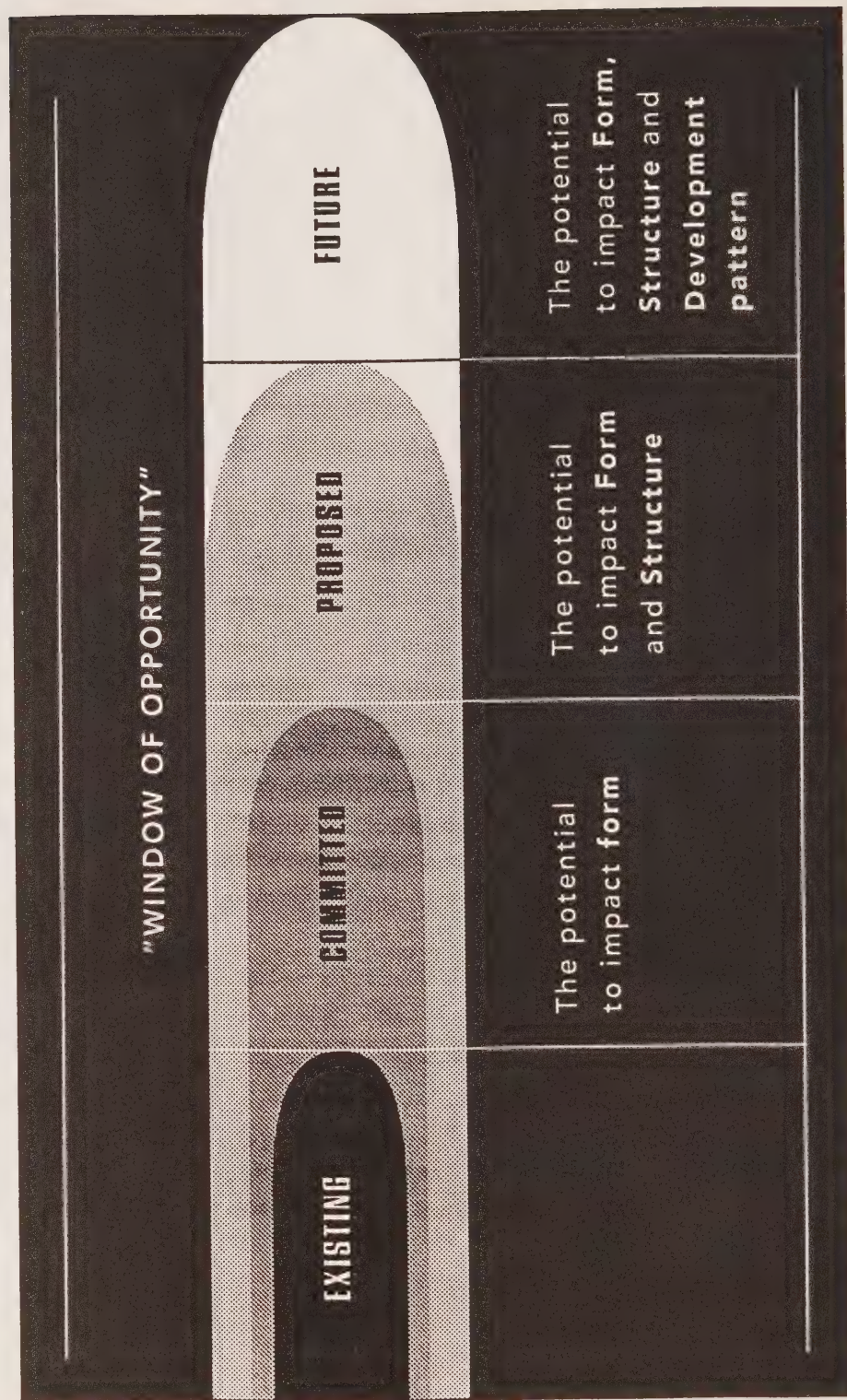
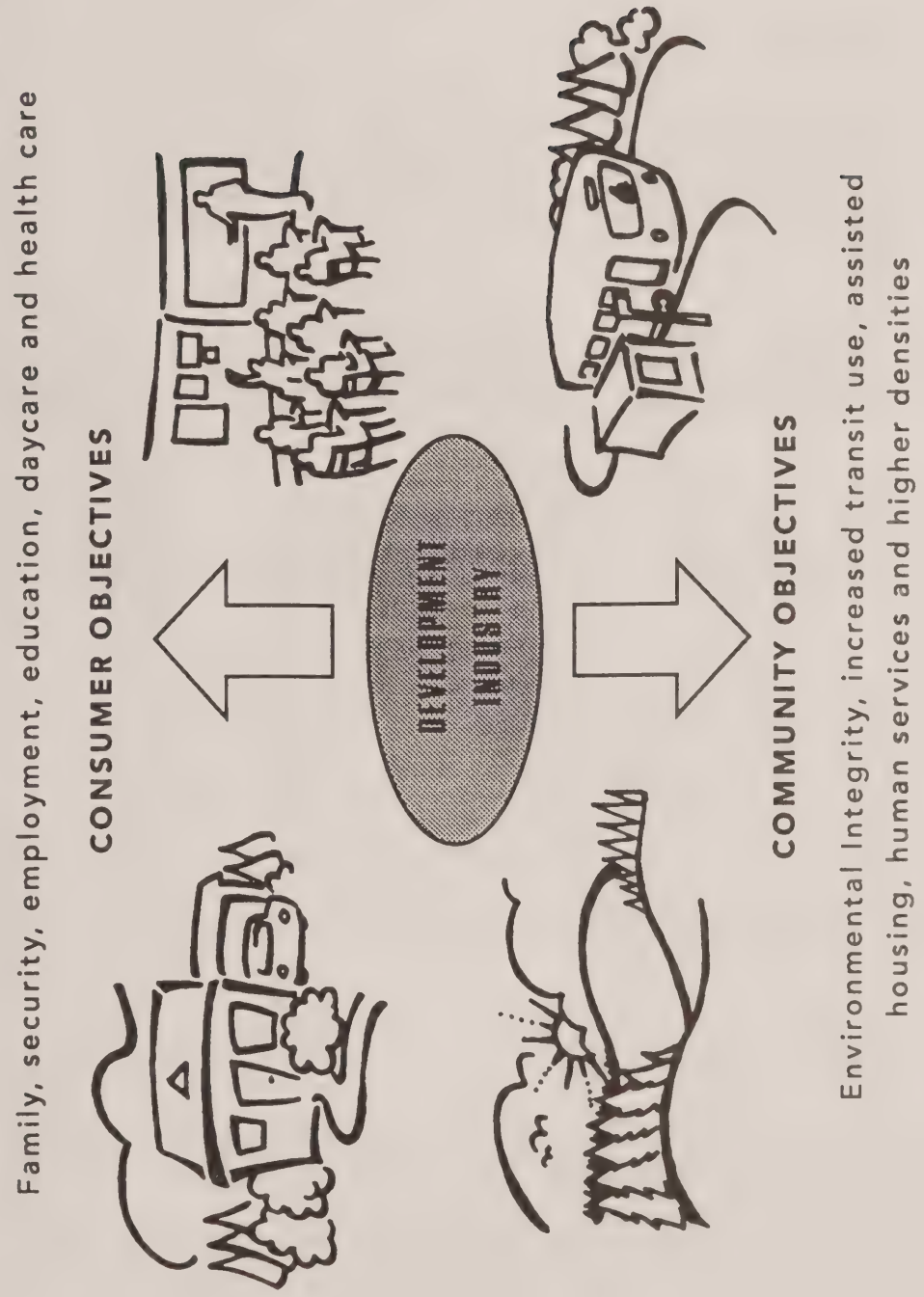


Figure 2.4

ACHIEVING CONSUMER AND COMMUNITY VALUES



CHAPTER 3

DEFINING URBAN FORM

Compact Urban Form

A more compact urban form must be achieved within the GTA to attain the desired objectives of environmental integrity, economic vitality and social equity. That means not only attaining higher intensity of uses in new developments (mostly in the still maturing surrounding regions) but also increasing densities in the older parts of the GTA through redevelopment and renewal opportunities.

The term "urban envelope" is often used to describe the outer limit of a more or less contiguous serviced development for a specific projected period. It is a useful image. Putting more into the envelope and making it last longer is the objective of achieving more compact urban form.

At the same time, the values expressed in the GTA vision document make it essential that existing neighbourhoods be protected. From time to time opportunities will arise for making more effective use of existing housing stock through conversions and other intensification efforts, but this should be done in a manner that respects neighbourhood identity and stability.

Decisions and policies promoting compact urban form are decisions and policies in favour of:

- environmental protection and energy conservation;
- agricultural land and open space conservation;
- enhanced public transportation, walking and cycling vs. private transportation;
- active, secure public spaces as small as the bus stop, as large as an entire shopping street;
- house forms and costs accessible to a broad range of ages, incomes, stages in the life cycle, and physical capabilities;
- more effective and efficient expenditures on infrastructure such as sewer and water systems, road, rail and public transit systems, etc., and
- accessible community services, including the provision of parks, recreation and education facilities.

To give some structure to a more compact urban form, and to protect the stability of existing communities, it is necessary to agree upon where increased densities should be focused. The earlier consultation exercise supports the principle of nodal concentrations as the basis for focusing increased densities. However, existing and emerging corridors are equally important as a means of guiding and structuring future urban form.

The identification of and the linkage between the major nodes and corridors is a key objective in setting down a long term urban form concept for the GTA.

To help define the guiding principles and criteria, case studies were used to illustrate successful examples of compact urban form. Appendix II summarizes these examples.

Components of Urban Form

As outlined in chapter 2, the term "urban form" is the combination of "development pattern", "structure" and "form/intensity". Consideration of urban form is important in ensuring that communities are healthy and liveable and is also a key force in determining whether an area is a place to work or live or whether the area has a sense of identity.

Urban form affects the distribution of human and other services throughout a municipality and thus the accessibility of these services to all residents. It affects the live-work relationship in the length of time needed to commute to and from work and the extent to which public transit is viable and efficiently used.

Clearly articulated directions and concepts for the urban form of an area would help guide the location of new infrastructure (e.g. sewer, water supplies, transit, communication, etc.). The ability to coordinate and link infrastructure both locally and regionally would help to ensure effective and efficient expenditures and efforts.

In the following discussion of "urban form", the greatest emphasis has been placed on "urban structure". Urban structure is the key to determining how well the GTA will function in the future and whether its various parts are interrelated and interconnected or are considered distinct and separate.

(i) Development Pattern

The urban envelope is the boundary of the lands required for urban development, within the GTA, to the year 2031. The key is to extend the life and capacity of the envelopes identified within regional and local Official Plans. To this end, the following principles are suggested.

- encourage higher residential and employment densities

- improve live/work relationship by reducing commuting by private automobile
- increase range of housing choices in close proximity to employment and other community services
- encourage more effective use of existing infrastructure
- focus public investment in needed infrastructure in nodes and corridors
- while single detached development will remain a significant component of the housing market, an increase in medium and higher density development should be encouraged

(ii) Structure

Urban structure relates to the hierarchy of human activities within an overall development pattern. It includes the interconnections between the higher density areas and between urban centres and neighbourhoods.

In a large urban area such as the GTA, a hierarchical structure usually exists. For example, certain services are centralized for greater accessibility. Therefore, in considering environmental, social equity and economic factors, an urban structure for the GTA should be recognized consisting of:

- (a) nodes
- (b) corridors
- (c) business parks/industrial areas
- (d) special purpose areas
- (e) lower density areas
- (f) large infill areas

The following principles are put forward as a guide for urban structure in the GTA:

- identification of a hierarchy of nodes and corridors based on public transit
- make maximum use of infrastructure and investments in land and buildings within nodes and corridors
- channel highest densities of residential and employment development to locations where high frequency transit is available

- identify strategic transfer points as places to concentrate a range of multiple uses
- protect stability of existing neighbourhoods

(a) Nodes

Characteristics

A node is an area of concentrated activity serving as a community focal point and providing services or functions not normally found elsewhere in the community. To work well, everything in a node should be close to everything else. This helps promote a pedestrian oriented environment by ensuring walking distances to and from public transit are reasonable. Towards the edges of the nodes and corridors, densities would gradually decrease and give way to surrounding lower density areas, feeding into the transit systems and other community services and facilities that will gradually develop.

To better define what a node is, the following characteristics may be helpful:

- **transportation**
 - public transit
- **density/intensity**
 - compact and denser than surrounding areas
 - concentration of jobs and people
- **employment**
 - range of employment opportunities
 - higher than average concentration
- **mix of land uses**
 - variety of uses: residential, employment, services
- **social/cultural**
 - existence of social, cultural, recreation or park facilities which lead to a sense of place and provide opportunities for people to gather as a community

- **accessability**
 - good access for seniors and special needs groups to a range of services and facilities
 - pedestrian as well as transit and auto oriented

Types of Nodes

Nodes can be classified as central, major, intermediate and local. Figure 3.1 describes each type based on function, mix of uses, scale and form.

Guiding Criteria

While describing the characteristics of nodes helps define them, the identification of criteria may serve to further refine the concept and provide for greater consistency in application throughout such a large area as the GTA. The criteria outlined in Figure 3.2 should **not** be considered as absolutes, but as a guide, something to be strived for over time. Differences will continue to exist from one part of the GTA to another, particularly between developing and more mature areas.

(b) Corridors

Many municipalities have historically had "main streets" serving as community focal points helping to establish certain identities for their respective municipalities. One of the best examples of a main street or "corridor" in the GTA is Yonge Street both within Metropolitan Toronto and the Region of York.

Corridors, by definition, are linear in nature running along main or arterial roads and in some instances along certain highways that have direct access. The key to successful corridors is diversity of use and maintaining activity throughout the day

Corridors must be highly accessible and capable of being serviced by public transit. Like nodes, corridors should be planned to encourage pedestrian movements and concentrated along the major road or in close proximity to it. Densities should be higher than those for a residential community but lower than those for a node.

Major corridors can be defined as those for which some form of higher capacity transit system might be foreseen by 2031. At a minimum, this means a bus line within its own right of way and includes different forms of fixed rail transit such as the LRT system in Scarborough or conventional subways. In more mature areas, major corridors already possess "main street" characteristics. However, in the developing areas of the GTA, major corridors will most likely start out as major transit routes serving as links between different nodes.

(c) Business Parks/Industrial Areas

In the municipalities surrounding Metropolitan Toronto, many jobs are located in industrial areas or business parks. However, they do not meet the criteria for nodes because they tend to be low density and automobile oriented.

The planning and design of industrial areas and business parks should strive to incorporate the concepts associated with nodes and corridors where possible. Specifically, they should move from single use to multi-use (e.g. employment and residential mix) areas. Also, they should strive to increase densities, particularly along main access routes to help ensure the viability of public transit.

The redevelopment of older business parks, like some of those in Metropolitan Toronto, could enable them to become nodes through the incorporation of residential units.

(d) Special Purpose Areas

Special purpose areas such as the Pearson International Airport, the Lake Ontario waterfront and the C.N.E./Ontario Place do not fit the concept of nodes or employment centres, yet experience a high number of daily trips to and from the facility on a daily or seasonal basis.

At the inter-regional scale, Pearson International Airport should be considered in any proposals for rapid transit improvements. For other special purpose areas, expanding the use of the facilities or providing for a greater diversity of uses would help incorporate them into the surrounding community and would help provide the pedestrian movement required to support continuous public transit service.

(e) Lower Density Areas

Much of the residential development in the GTA takes place in single family residential neighbourhoods. This type of development is land extensive and almost totally reliant on the automobile.

New residential neighbourhoods should be made more compact by introducing a greater mix of residential types and densities. Efforts in the planning and design of local neighbourhoods should be made to reduce the reliance on the automobile and more readily provide for walking and cycling to the local plaza or corner store.

For existing lower density neighbourhoods opportunities may exist for selective small scale intensification such as the creation of accessory apartments or the development of duplexes or townhouses as small scale infilling initiatives. Small scale intensification, particularly in aging neighbourhoods, could help ensure the continuing viability of the area.

(f) Large Infill Areas

Certain sizeable parcels of land exist in urban areas that can have a major impact on the urban structure of a municipality if redeveloped (e.g. Downsview Airport lands, or former industrial sites). When redevelopment of such areas is contemplated, the concepts of compact development, nodes and corridors should be appropriately integrated into the planning.

(iii) Form/Intensity

Form/intensity is the third major component of "urban form". It is the intensity of human activity which occurs within higher density areas, along major roadways and within local neighbourhoods.

The GTA should strive for higher densities and a greater mix of uses. In so doing, greater emphasis should be placed on planning for people rather than automobiles. The following principles should be considered as a guide:

- encourage a mix of residential, employment and cultural activities
- urban design for higher density areas and along main streets should be focused on increasing attractiveness for pedestrian use and encouraging better transit access

Proposed GTA Urban Structure Concept

Figure 3.3 illustrates the working group's view of an emerging urban structure within the GTA. The concept represents a combination of what exists now, what can be built upon and what might be added in the future. This report has clearly indicated that the existing development pattern within the GTA is essentially established until 2011 and has also indicated the significance of emerging major corridors and their function in linking existing and future nodes.

The critical challenge of the next 20 years is how this emerging urban structure will develop and mature through the growth of existing nodes, the development of nodes now in the planning process and the completion of missing corridor linkages. The opportunity exists to channel development in a manner which extends the life and capacity of the existing urban area within the GTA and thus form the basis of a longer term development pattern and structure to 2031 and beyond.

Although based on the nodal principle, the working group prefers to describe its concept as a network of linked major corridors within which are a series of major and intermediate nodes.

The concept represents the option put forward by the working group for discussion purposes. It should be stated quite frankly that not everyone in the working group agreed to the identification of all of the nodes shown, to the scale of some of the nodes or their potential to achieve the level of development anticipated. In developing the concept illustrated on Figure 3.3, the working group held a series of intensive discussions during which opinion ranged back and forth on the level of detail which should be put forward.

Initially, consideration was given to showing only major nodes, but this did not seem to present a full enough indication of long term urban structure to serve as a useful basis for subsequent discussion.

As a result, the working group identified not only the major nodes and the corridors linking them, but also added key intermediate level nodes within these corridors. Initially, agreement was reached on a series of twenty intermediate nodes. These were then supplemented by five additional nodes following the concerns expressed by several local municipalities.

What this results in is a concept based on a broad east-west corridor passing from Burlington to Oshawa through the central part of Metropolitan Toronto, and a second corridor forming a broad loop extending north from the east-west corridor.

Within this over-all framework a series of other corridors provide key links to complete the network.

The destiny of some of the nodes shown is clearer than others. Some nodes already meet the criteria established earlier in this report and others are well on their way to doing so. However, the future of other nodes, particularly at the edges of the network, still needs to be established.

Places such as Brampton, Vaughan Centre, Langstaff and Markham Centres, for example, are all shown as intermediate nodes. It is possible that at least some of these may have the long-term potential to become major nodes depending on their success in attracting the necessary levels of jobs and residences.

As the concept becomes subject to further scrutiny, some of the nodes shown may drop off and others may emerge. For example, issues surrounding two places outside the framework were raised during the working group's discussions. In the Milton area, the issue of long-range expansion needs to be finally resolved. In Durham Region the possibility of development of a new community on the province's land holdings in Pickering or a proposed federal airport may be further clarified over time. In both cases the emergence of nodes is possible.

The resulting framework provides a suggested overall structure of the GTA which, with refinements after infrastructure and other considerations are brought to bear, could be incorporated into regional official plans. This would establish a common understanding between the five regions of where and how the concentrations of employment and residential use would take place and would provide a basis for the strategic planning of transit and other community services, both hard and soft, needed to accommodate such densities.

Essential to the concept outlined in Figure 3.3 is the definition of an urban envelope to contain the nodes and corridors. At this point, the envelope is shown in broad terms and it is important that it be refined through the completion of regional official plans. If the idea of an urban envelope is to have meaning, it should not be a line that is shifted outward every few years to simply accommodate more low density development. To do so defeats the entire purpose of this exercise. As stated earlier, the urban envelope must be made to last longer by developing in a more compact form, not only within nodes and corridors, but by taking other opportunities in both "greenfields" and re-urbanizing situations.

Conceptually, centres on the periphery of the main urban envelope could function as transportation transfer points, permitting the transfer of both people and goods into and out of the GTA. Such gateways could be the terminus for GO transit services, enabling people to transfer from automobiles to reach the urban centre, or perhaps transferring from longer distance rail services. These gateways might develop as special purpose nodes with a degree of intensification taking place.

What about the wider impact of the GTA? The boundary of the GTA is somewhat arbitrary: the five regions contain the major contiguously developed urban area of Greater Toronto, but the GTA's effects reach well beyond these regions as any examination of commuting patterns will show. It is important that the next ring of centres beyond the GTA, including Peterborough, Barrie, Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph, Cambridge and Brantford, retain their identity as strong independent communities and not simply become commuter "bedroom" communities. Care must therefore be taken to co-ordinate long-term settlement and transportation planning between the GTA and the surrounding counties and regions.

TYPES OF NODES

FIGURE 3.1

TYPE OF NODE	FUNCTION	MIX OF USES	SCALE	FORM (density/intensity)
CENTRAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unique focal point of provincial and national significance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial/national significant uses (e.g. government, culture, tourism, business) National head offices Limited residential Highest employment concentration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest densities Higher level transit (subway/LRT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest building concentration Street oriented Max. pedestrian movements Unique feature/facilities (cultural/business/tourism attractions, i.e. sports and entertainment)
MAJOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GTA-wide focal point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High diversity of uses High employment concentration Mix of residential/commercial/retail but residential employment balance higher than central node 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively high densities Higher level transit (subway/LRT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High building concentration Street oriented Pedestrian oriented Diversity of uses
INTERMEDIATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intra-regional focal point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment/commercial/retail predominant Growing high density residential component Some diversity of uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-medium densities More vehicular oriented than major/central Medium level transit, surface transit (bus, streetcar, GO transit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Siting of buildings integrated with transit More extensive parking facilities
LOCAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community/neighbourhood focal point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local retail and service uses (e.g. smaller shopping malls) Service related employment Residential component 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower to medium density Lowest level of transit (e.g. bus) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures oriented to maximize walking/cycling access Auto-oriented

GUIDING CRITERIA

FIGURE 3.2

TYPE OF NODE	SIZE OF NODE	RESIDENT/EMPLOYMENT MIX	DENSITY COVERAGE	EMPLOYMENT (levels to support transit)
MAJOR	75 - 150 ha	1 resident per 2.5 jobs	<u>Reurbanizing</u> In excess of 6 times coverage F.S.I. <u>Urbanizing</u> In excess of 4 times coverage F.S.I.	25,000 to 100,000 jobs Desirable target 60,000
INTERMEDIATE	up to 75 ha	1 resident per 1.5 - 2.0 jobs	<u>Reurbanizing Areas</u> 3 to 6 times coverage F.S.I. <u>Urbanizing</u> 2 to 4 times coverage F.S.I.	7,000 to 25,000 jobs
LOCAL	up to 75 ha	1 resident per 0.5 jobs	<u>Reurbanizing</u> 2 to 4 times coverage F.S.I. <u>Urbanizing</u> 1 to 2 times coverage F.S.I.	Less than 7,000 jobs

To promote the concept of live/work within an area, the ideal mix for the GTA, over time, is 1.5 people per job.

LEGEND

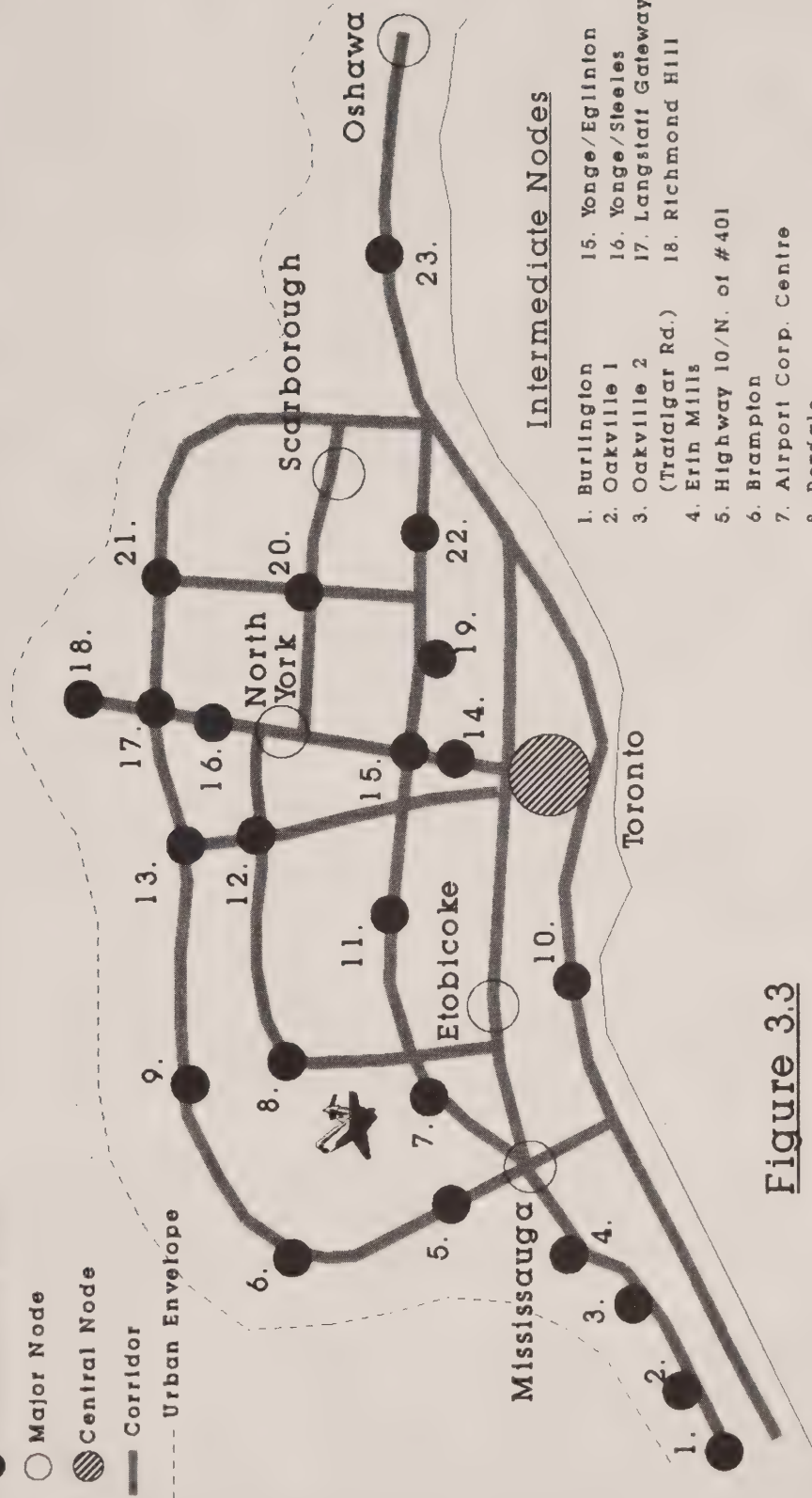
● Intermediate Node

○ Major Node

▨ Central Node

— Corridor

- - - Urban Envelope



Intermediate Nodes

1. Burlington
2. Oakville 1
3. Oakville 2
4. Erin Mills
5. Highway 10/N. of #401
6. Brampton
7. Airport Corp. Centre
8. Rexdale
9. Hwys. #7, #427
10. Mimico Centre
11. York City Centre
12. York University
13. Vaughan Centre
14. Yonge/St. Clair
15. Yonge/Eglinton
16. Yonge/Steeles
17. Langstaff Gateway
18. Richmond Hill

Figure 3.3

GTA URBAN STRUCTURE CONCEPT

✈ Special Purpose Node
(Airport)

ACHIEVING MORE COMPACT URBAN FORM

An opportunity exists, now, to seek public support for the principles and mechanisms needed to guide development in a way which extends the life and capacity of existing infrastructure and helps create communities of greater diversity. The challenge will be to develop an urban form which is varied and exciting; which gives people genuine life-style choices in the type and location of housing that can satisfy their personal values and, at the same time, complement broader community objectives.

We have the opportunity to create a vital urban region with distinct, vigorous focal points providing a wide range of activities and services all supported by a linked transit network enabling improved access between the main concentrations of homes and employment. People will have more opportunity to live and work in the same area and the definition of key locations for higher density development will help maintain the identity and stability of existing neighbourhoods.

However, only through a process in which the roles and responsibilities of the key proponents are clear will there be any chance of achieving this improved urban form. In the first instance, this means seeking general agreement on what the roles of the various levels of government will be and how they fit together.

The Province

The key role of the provincial government in striving for a more compact urban form for the GTA will be to maintain the present cooperative atmosphere and provide the leadership needed to keep provincial and municipal people working together as the Challenge document is clarified and refined over the months ahead.

The province must also provide whatever legislation or special powers are needed. For example, in order to give the formality to a provincial growth management policy which may be required by the Ontario Municipal Board, it may be appropriate for the province to adopt a policy statement under Section 3 of the Planning Act requiring all municipalities and provincial ministries and agencies to "have regard to" the GTA policy.

To ensure that a common understanding of the finally agreed concept of compact nodal urban form is realized, it is essential that Official Plans be completed for all regional municipalities and that they incorporate policies which clearly provide the GTA-wide context for regional and local policies.

More specific provincial guidelines may prove necessary in some instances in order to assist municipalities in understanding and applying the nodal concept.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs will play the key role in coordinating implementation measures at the municipal level and should also coordinate the activities of other ministries so that a common overall goal for the GTA is clearly understood and acted upon.

The Regional Municipalities

While the role of the province is to clarify the overall vision for the GTA, it is the five regional municipalities that must refine and apply it through strategic policies. Put another way, in terms of the components of urban form discussed earlier, the broad pattern of development would be set by the province, urban structure should be the responsibility of the regions, in consultation with local municipalities, and the form and intensity of development should rest largely with the local level.

Regional municipalities should work with local municipalities to seek agreement on regional-level official plan policies to provide the structure for a hierarchy of nodes and corridors. The regions should also provide the cooperative networks needed to ensure that a common understanding exists between municipalities on the compact nodal concept and its implementation within each region.

The Local Municipalities

At the end of the day, it is the local municipalities that will have the most challenging role in bringing a new urban form to life. Working with both the province and regional levels for support, the local municipalities will provide the essential link to communities and neighbourhoods.

Local municipalities will have the task of refining the structure and nature of nodes and corridors within their jurisdiction. They will review, and where necessary revise official plan policies and zoning bylaw requirements to ensure their consistency with the finally agreed urban form concept. It is at this level that discretion will be most needed in order to maintain the spirit of the GTA vision while at the same time providing for the pragmatism needed to deal with real life situations.

Linkages to Other Working Groups

It is recognized that linkages with the other five working groups will be necessary to further the nodes and corridors concept within a more compact urban form context. Some of the issues that will need to be addressed are:

- (a) countryside - identification of issues at the rural/urban interface and mechanisms to address them; the extent to which to integrate a greenland strategy with an urban form strategy
- (b) human services - integration of human services into the planning process; implications of a compact urban form on human services
- (c) infrastructure - identification of infrastructure needed to support compact urban form and analysis of deficiencies
- (d) economic vitality - implications on industrial strategy of compact urban form
- (e) investment planning & mechanisms - cost implications of compact urban form

A more iterative process will need to take place to ensure that the GTA remains a healthy and liveable place through the shared values of social equity, enhanced employment and economic vitality.

APPENDIX I

URBAN FORM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Ministry/Municipality</u>
Gerry Fitzpatrick, Chair	Ministry of Municipal Affairs
Christine Primeau, Staff	O.G.T.A
Janet Babcock	The Regional Municipality of York
Jim Baird	Town of Markham
Lisa Blumer	Ministry of Housing
Dave Duncan	Ministry of Transportation
Tom Farrell	Ministry of Natural Resources
Bob Farrow	Ministry of Tourism & Recreation
Robert Gepp	Ministry of the Environment
Bob Johnson	Regional Municipality of Durham
Eva Li	Ministry of Government Services
John Livey	The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto
Dave McCleary	Regional Municipality of Halton
Lance Naismith	Metropolitan Toronto Police
William Power	Town of Richmond Hill
Paul Robinson	City of Vaughan
Lorne Ross	City of Scarborough
Sue Santedicola	Ministry of Culture & Communications
Bill Waite	City of Mississauga
Mary Ellen Warren	Ministry of Energy
Gwen Winder	Town of Ajax

APPENDIX II

CASE STUDIES

The reasoning behind forming a case studies sub-group within the urban form working group was to try and find - and learn from - real examples of compact urban form within the GTA. There is nothing quite so graphic or convincing in trying to encourage a more compact urban form than the ability to draw upon such examples.

The case studies group proceeded from the following premises:

- that "compact urban form" is entirely relative to time and place;
- that there are many planners, politicians, developers and citizens across the G.T.A. who have worked hard to achieve good examples of compact urban form in their communities in the last few years, probably with a good deal of struggle, effort and risk-taking.

The design was to reach out to the local municipalities who make up the GTA to praise these examples of successful compact urban form.

Planning Departments were contacted in as many local municipalities as possible and were asked to forward staff reports on proposals meeting these criteria:

- residential, either alone or in combination with other land uses such as commercial, day care, churches, etc.;
- approved by the Municipal Council;
- could be greenfields development, infill or redevelopment;
- at densities which pressed back the frontiers of "normal" in their community's experience.

The response was tremendous. Over 60 examples were forwarded in a two week period. With a more considered approach to the research and with more time, a wealth of additional examples could be identified.

The Case Studies Group reviewed each proposal and summarized information for each example: location, description, context, reasons for staff-Council support if available; plus one or two graphics from the staff report. Four themes emerged from the Group's review:

A More Compact Urban Form

- Is acceptable to existing communities in direct proportion to the time, budget and talent available to support quality in architectural and urban design.

- Achieves a good fit in existing communities in direct proportion to the creativity, sensitivity and responsiveness of proponents.
- Requires attention to the provision of supporting social and cultural services to ensure positive, life-enhancing relationships.
- Provides housing in the community that young children will desire and can afford when they leave home;
- Provides housing in the community that parents will desire and can afford in the event of disability, should their income drop, when the home is too much to maintain.

The Case Studies Group focused on individual developments because these are the "lowest common denominators" of a more compact urban form. Through examples like these citizens, community leaders, local Councils and staff develop lasting impressions.

Without agreement that quality life-styles and excellence in urban design are available at the individual project level, we are unlikely to mobilize the creativity and energy of municipal resources.

Agreement that excellence is available does not in itself lead to a more compact urban form at the local and regional level. Simple notions of efficiency in the provision of expensive public services, and the desire to build a "community" should oblige planning agencies to direct these forces for change to preferred locations to achieve specific public objectives:

- to create a focus of human activity... a sense of place... a focus for cultural activities, events, celebrations... from which springs an improved sense of community and a pride of place;
- to reach the threshold populations required for improvements to public services for both new and existing residents/businesses... in transit, education, health care, recreational, cultural activities;
- to increase local opportunities for employment and business formation.

Information on individual applications has been filed with the OGTA. A service could be provided by the Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Municipal Affairs or OGTA to local planners by maintaining a current and accessible inventory of approved "compact urban form" developments. In the final analysis, local area planners and Councillors must be able to point to "good" examples in comparable situations across the GTA if public/industry acceptance is to be won out there in the streets and neighbourhoods.

The Case Studies Group was unable to produce photographs or slides of the case studies due to weather and time constraints. Standard report graphics do not convey development proposals well enough. Eighteen examples were selected for incorporation in this report to illustrate work being done right across the GTA (Appendix III, Figure 1).

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

Figure 1

Municipality	Location	Density/ Units per Acre	FSI	Height/ Storeys
1. East York	10-12 Gower Street	101	2.0	7
2. East York	704 Mortimer Avenue	97	1.9	3
3. Markham	122-124 Robinson Street	41	///	3
4. Etobicoke	1447 Royal York Road	45	1.25	4
5. Markham	Markham Road at Future 407	+25 -	///	2-6
6. Caledon	95 Queen Street North	6	///	2-3
7. East Gwillimbury	Thompson Drive	22	///	3-4
8. Scarborough	841 Birchmount Street	79	2.0	7
9. East York	660 Eglinton Avenue	74	2.0	7-9
10. North York	Bathurst/Lawrence	73	2.9	15
11. York	1 King Street	100	2.4	12
12. North York	1 Greenland Road	30	///	4
13. Whitby	701 Rossland Road	45	///	12
14. Scarborough	2472 Eglinton Avenue	95	2.5	18
15. Mississauga	Prince of Wales Drive	150	///	6-45
16. Oakville (Bronte)	Trade Wind Drive and South Wind Terrace	25	///	3
17. Oakville	2006 Glenada Crescent	30	///	2
18. Oakville	Lakeshore Road and Robinson Street	60	///	4.5

Copies of the actual case study examples are available through Christine Primeau of the OGTA at 314-6400.



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